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Small agency integration progress

Arthur Isley, Project Manager for Small Agency Integration, is "feeling good" about the progress being made thus far in the integration process. At press time, 20 small-sized agencies (agencies with fewer than 100 employees) have fully transitioned to VITA support.

When asked to summarize the feedback his team has received from agencies being integrated, Isley adds, "Agencies have been enthusiastic about the level of support they will now receive and have been complimentary of the VITA staff that has been working with them during the integration process. Concerns raised regarding funding for on-going activities are being addressed."

Standardizing technology across the small agencies (including desktop, network, and security components), while challenging for all involved, is progressing well. The experience gathered throughout all aspects of Small Agency Integration is proving invaluable as VITA moves forward with the next phases of integration.

The legislative deadline for small-sized agency integration is Dec. 31, 2003. Chris Saneda, VITA's director of Customer Support Services reports that, "We fully intend to meet the requirements set forth by the General Assembly."

Featured Small Agency: Department of Historic Resources

On Oct. 17, the Department of Historic Resources (DHR) signed their Service Transition Plan (STP) and became an official part of the VITA family. DHR lost key support personnel during the budget cuts, so VITA has stepped in at a crucial time. Rich DeLauder of VITA was the project leader for transitioning the agency.

DeLauder felt one of the most significant changes VITA accomplished with DHR was stabilizing and organizing its network design into one network. And once this was complete, the network has accelerated its performance. Trent Park of DHR described the transition process: "As a small agency, the Department of Historic Resources stands to benefit exponentially by having support from the full range of dedicated IT professionals at VITA. The work that Rich DeLauder, John Perkins, Rodney Rose and Matt Perry have performed during the initial phase has not only increased the

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security of our IT network, but has enhanced its performance such that many end-users have noticed the difference in speed and reliability. Though the transition is a huge undertaking, we have experienced little disruption so far, thanks to good coordination and careful planning between DHR and VITA."
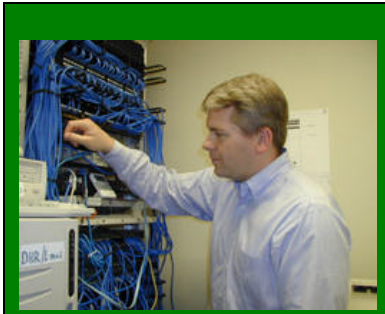
Trent Park of DHR surveys a patch panel.

DHR will have better service, new routers, a faster network, a new Windows 2000 server and updated desktop security on individual PCs and servers. DeLauder said, "DHR took me in, gave me a tour of their facility and taught me what they do day in and day out." This assistance was instrumental in helping VITA employees learn the network and how to best step up a new design.

The types of standardization and optimization activities that VITA provides will vary from agency to agency depending on the needs. At DHR, VDOT updated the anti-virus software, and VITA installed Windows software to update the server. Rich felt the transition was a huge success and said DHR was "very friendly, very helpful, and thankful for newly added optimization and standardization to their systems." Rich added, "I couldn't have asked for a better agency to work with during a transition."

Integration Management Office Web site launches

VITA recently launched the Integration Management Office (IMO) Web section www.vita.virginia.gov/integration. The IMO site replaced the To-VITA transition site and contains information for small, medium, and large agencies, such as Phases/Key Dates, the IMO Staff organization, links to the Service Delivery Workbook, and a listing of all integration related documents and presentations.

VITA recognizes the importance of current and accurate information prior to, during, and after integration for both agencies and employees. Through the IMO site, VITA will provide updates on the continuing progress of the integration process.

The IMO section is intended to serve the information needs of agencies and employees being integrated. We welcome your suggestions for integration-related content/information. Please email us at ContactUs@vita.virginia.gov with your suggestions.

Information Technology Investment Board names Miller as Vice Chair

The Information Technology Investment Board (ITIB) held its regularly scheduled meeting on Oct. 15, at the VITA Operations Center in Richmond. At the meeting, the board selected Dr. Mary Guy Miller as its Vice Chair. (Read the full press release.) Dr. Miller is President and CEO of IDD, Inc. a full-service IT consulting firm specializing in e-business solutions and technology integration.

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In addition to this appointment, the Board selected three committees to assist in its duties: Finance, Legislative, and Project Review. These committees are in addition to the CIO Search Committee already established. The agenda also included a legislative update, an update from the CIO Search Committee, and a review of the VITA Funding Process. An overview of ITIB Supervisory Responsibilities was presented by John Westrick, ITIB Counsel, Office of the Attorney General. Please visit the ITIB documents page for meeting materials.

The board held an ad hoc meeting on Nov. 5 at the House Appropriations Committee Meeting Room in the General Assembly Building. Topics discussed were the CIO search, the VITA budget and interim rates. Supporting documents for this meeting can be found on the ITIB documents page.

Another ad hoc meeting will be held on Dec. 1 at the VITA Operations Center in Richmond from 1 to 4 p.m.

Dr. Mary Guy Miller

Project Management Development Program begins

Continuing Virginia's success in establishing groundbreaking reform initiatives, on Oct. 1, 2003, VITA announced the creation of the Commonwealth Project Manager Development Program (PMDP).

The Chief Information Officer (CIO) is required by The Code of Virginia to establish qualification and training standards for information technology project managers. The CIO directed VITA to develop the standard. On Sept. 24, 2003, the Project Manager Training and Selection Standard www.vita.virginia.gov/docs/pmdpStandard.cfm was approved and on Oct. 1 the PMDP Web page went live www.vita.virginia.gov/itTrain/pmDev/pmDev.cfm.

"Interest in the PMDP has been amazing," said Mike Sandridge, Project Manager for the PMDP. "We have had 374 people from 62 agencies, institutions of higher education and consulting companies register online since the launch date."

The Commonwealth Project Manager Development Web page provides information on project manager qualification standards, access to qualification testing, cost effective training, and a project management information clearinghouse.

"Employees from 51 agencies have requested or participated in the Commonwealth Project Management Overview Training so far," Sandridge continued, "One hundred forty-six people attended the first round of training sessions held in October. Response has been so great, we have had to schedule additional training classes."

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When asked about the overview training, Sandridge provided this description, "The Commonwealth Project Management Overview Training class provides a broad overview, focusing on connecting standards, procedures, and processes and being able to understand the big picture from the little picture." The class also includes a demonstration of useful tools, as well as an introduction to available resources.

Feedback from the first round of training has been outstanding, with over 90% of participants rating the training as good or excellent.

What's next for the PMDP? According to Sandridge, a great deal. "Another Overview training session was held Nov. 12. Additional dates are being added in March, May, and August 2004. On Dec. 9, we are bringing the Overview training to Virginia Tech to serve the training requests from Southwest Virginia, and we are currently in discussions with community colleges across the state to build out the training opportunities," Sandridge adds excitedly, "What we are doing is building a Project Management community. Ultimately, we would like to create a network of volunteer Project Management Mentors that will lead seminars for other project managers on specific topics."

What is the best advice for interested parties? "Visit the PMDP Web page at www.vita.virginia.gov/itTrain/pmDev/pmDev.cfm," Sandridge continues, "However, if you are not currently a Project Manager or a Project Sponsor, you do not need to be trained immediately. You are not getting left behind. Overview training will be offered on a regular basis throughout the calendar year."

For additional information on the PMDP, contact Mike Sandridge at michael.sandridge@vita.virginia.gov.

VITA helps provide enhanced 9-1-1 services

Cellular telephone users in Virginia are safer today because of a program administered by VITA. In fact, because of this program, Virginia is a national leader in Enhanced Wireless 911 service. This service provides emergency call centers the same caller location information traditionally provided by land line telephones. Location information is crucial in dispatching emergency assistance where it is needed.

The need for such an enhanced system was dramatically demonstrated during Hurricane Isabel when many calls for help originated from cellular telephones. Lieutenant Governor Tim Kaine, during a recent tour of Orange County's emergency call center agrees. "This is a great step forward in emergency response," said Kaine. "This technology will reduce response times and likely save lives." Funding for the enhanced equipment flows through VITA's Wireless E-911 Services Board which administers a grant program enabled by legislation passed during the 1998 General Assembly. Here's how it works: Every cellular number in Virginia is assessed a monthly 75-cent surcharge

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collected by the Commonwealth's cellular service providers. These funds are forwarded to the board for distribution. Localities prepare and submit grant applications to purchase the needed equipment for their emergency call centers.

The board, chaired on an interim basis by VITA Director of Strategic Management Services Jerry Simonoff and staffed by Telecommunications and Network Services' Steve Marzolf, Mel Sheridan and Dorothy Spears-Dean, processes applications and distributes the funds based on the actual cost of deploying the needed technology. Simonoff said, "The partnership between local 911 professionals, the telecommunication industry and the Wireless E-911 Services Board has been the key to success of the wireless enhanced 911 program in Virginia."

When fully implemented, each emergency call center will have access to several databases giving information not only about the specific location of the call but attributes about the caller as well. This may include information such as building access, known medical situations and other information emergency crews might need to effectively and safely respond. A future enhancement to the system will allow an operator to download photographic maps of the caller's location from a database developed by VITA's Virginia Geographic Information Network (VGIN). This can be important in terms of terrain, alternate access routes and information not readily known except by visual means.

Lt. Governor Kaine (second from left) attends a demonstration of the Emergency Call Center in Orange County.

It is important to note that while about 60% of state cellular users are currently covered by enhanced location technology, not every cellular telephone is capable of communicating with these systems. Some service providers require that a Global Positioning System (GPS) chip be present in the individual telephone while others rely on triangulation schemes based on their cell tower locations. Cellular telephone users should check with their service provider to determine if they can benefit from the enhanced E-911 service. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has mandated that all "legacy" cellular telephones be replaced by the end of 2005 with units capable of communicating with the enhanced E-911 system.

Employment opportunities at VITA

Interested in working at VITA? Be sure to check the VITA Web site and click on "Employment Opportunities" at the bottom of the page. Or go directly to the job listing page at: **www.vita.virginia.gov/jobs/jobListing.cfm**. New postings will be occurring on an ongoing basis.

» Back to VITA briefs main page: www.vita.virginia.gov/news/vitaBriefs/vitaBriefs.cfm

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